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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 325th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 August 2010, at 10.30 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report on the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Rabat on 1 and 2 July 2010

2. **Mr. Tanin** (Afghanistan) said that the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Rabat on 1 and 2 July 2010 on the theme, "Strengthening the support by African States for a just and lasting solution of the question of Jerusalem", had received ample media coverage and been well attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and civil society organizations. The Committee had been represented by Mr. Oumar Daou (Mali), Mr. Mohammed Loulichki (Morocco), Mr. Riyadh Mansour (Palestine) and himself as Vice-Chair of the Committee and head of delegation.

3. The meeting had been opened by Mr. Taïb Fassi Fihri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco. Mr. Bader Al-Dafa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, had read out a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General. Palestine had been represented by Mr. Ahmed Qurei of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Statements had been made by two members of the Israeli parliament, one from the Labour Party and one from the Kadima Party, as well as five Palestinian citizens and 17 experts.

4. It had been emphasized that the question of Jerusalem remained a key permanent status issue in any future Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Participants had expressed serious concern about illegal Israeli practices aimed at altering the status and demographic character of East Jerusalem. They had stressed that its annexation had never been recognized by the international community and reiterated that such unilateral actions violated international law and impeded efforts to resume meaningful negotiations.

5. Emphasizing the historical, cultural and religious significance of Jerusalem as a holy city, participants had expressed serious concern at continued Israeli excavations in and around the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound in East Jerusalem and had called for an end to all acts of provocation and incitement. It had been stressed that there was no alternative to the two-State solution, including a negotiated solution to the question of Jerusalem, taking into account the concerns of both sides while ensuring access to the city's holy sites for people of all religions.

6. Participants had commended the constructive role played by the King and Government of Morocco, as well as by African Governments and civil society, in bringing about a solution to the problem. Palestinians and their supporters could learn from the experience of African States in their quest for decolonization, independence and sovereignty. The African Governments had been urged to continue their efforts to raise support for the Palestinian people in international mechanisms such as the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned States.

7. The Committee delegation had met with the Presidents of both houses of Parliament. They had emphasized the importance of cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations and had been assured of that parliament's support for and cooperation with the Committee's work. Lastly, the Division for Palestinian Rights had developed a meeting feedback survey in order to make such events more relevant from a substantive point of view. A pilot version had been tested at the Rabat meeting.

8. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) reiterated his country's commitment to the establishment of an independent, viable Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

9. *The Committee took note of the Vice-Chair's report on the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine.*

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

10. **The Chair**, speaking on behalf of the Committee, extended his condolences to the delegation of Malta on the death of Mr. Guido de Marco, former President of Malta and of the General Assembly, who had been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause.

11. On 14 June 2010, the Government of Israel had approved the establishment of an Israeli commission of inquiry into the Gaza flotilla incident of 31 May 2010. The commission would be headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court of Israel, Mr. Jacob Turkel.

12. On 15 June 2010, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert Serry, had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

13. On 20 June 2010, Israel had announced the easing of the blockade on Gaza. Any items not included in a new list of banned goods would be permitted entry into Gaza.

14. On 6 July 2010, the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, had met with the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, at the White House in order to discuss the proximity talks and ways to progress to direct talks. On 7 July 2010, the Secretary-General had met with the Prime Minister of Israel at United Nations Headquarters to discuss the peace process and the situation in Gaza.

15. On 21 July 2010, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The meeting had been followed by an open debate at which the Chair had made a statement on behalf of the Committee.

16. On 23 July 2010, the President of the Human Right Council had appointed three experts to conduct an independent international fact-finding mission in order to investigate violations of international law resulting from the Israeli attacks on the Gaza aid flotilla.

17. On 22 and 23 July 2010, the Department of Public Information had convened the eighteenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held in Lisbon.

18. On 29 July 2010, the League of Arab States had met in Cairo and endorsed, in principle, the holding of direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations when President Mahmoud Abbas decided that the conditions were appropriate.

19. On 2 August 2010, the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel had issued a statement that Israel would take part in a United Nations investigation into the Gaza aid flotilla incident of 31 May 2010. On the same day, the Secretary-General had issued a letter announcing the establishment of a Panel of Inquiry on the incident. The panel, chaired by the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, had been convened on 10 August 2010 and had already met with the Secretary-General.

20. On 17 August 2010, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

21. The Secretary of State of the United States of America, Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, Mr. George Mitchell, were expected to announce the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

22. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was very difficult as a result of illegal and brutal actions by the occupying Power. At a recent meeting, the Security Council had been updated on the tragic situation resulting from the blockade of the Gaza Strip and increasing settlement activity, particularly in and around East Jerusalem. The Council had also been briefed on that situation by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Regardless of what was stated by Israel, the situation on the ground remained fundamentally unchanged. A letter detailing recent crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory would be sent to the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly later that day. Although additional truckloads of foodstuffs were being allowed into Gaza, the needs of the population were still far from met and there was a global consensus, shared by the Secretary-General, that the immoral and abhorrent blockade against Palestinians in Gaza needed to be lifted immediately.

23. Pursuant to the request by the Secretary-General for information on steps taken to implement General Assembly resolution 64/254 entitled "Second follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict", the Palestinian authorities had conducted transparent and independent investigations that conformed to international standards and had submitted its response on time. The same could not be said for Israel, which had submitted a document that conformed neither to international criteria nor to the provisions of that resolution.

24. The Secretary-General was to be commended for initiating an investigation by an independent Panel of Inquiry into crimes committed on the high seas against the Gaza-bound flotilla. The Panel's preliminary report was expected to be ready in mid-September, 2010.

25. The proximity talks had not been successful. The League of Arab States had recently agreed, in principle, to direct negotiations between the two sides. However, for those to succeed, lessons needed to be drawn from previous negotiations: Israel must halt all settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, lift the blockade on Gaza and accept clear terms of reference that included the principle that the borders to be negotiated were those of June 1967, with minor adjustments made by exchanging land of similar kind and value. Practical measures must be taken in order to ensure that Israel met those terms of reference.

26. The Quartet had released a statement which, inter alia, invited Israel and the Palestinians to launch direct negotiations in Washington, D.C., on 2 September 2010. United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had recently announced that those negotiations would be hosted by President Barack Obama and that His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak would also attend. The Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization would respond to that invitation in the near future.

Request by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to become a member of the Committee

27. **The Chair** said that by note verbale dated 15 June 2010, the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which currently held observer status with the Committee, had expressed a wish to become a member. If the Committee approved that request, it would be forwarded to the President of the General Assembly so that the Assembly could take a decision on the matter.

28. *The request of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to become a member of the Committee was approved.*

29. **Mr. De Las Ovalles Colmenares** (Observer for Venezuela) said that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would be honoured to accept membership in the Committee, which had been established in response to the need to reinstate the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty and to support their return to their homes. His country's request for membership in the Committee came at a time when the Middle East peace process required authentic and transparent commitments from the international community. All States should contribute to the noble goal of peace, and his delegation hoped to continue to make a genuine contribution, however humble. He affirmed his delegation's commitment to achievement of the Committee's worthy goals.

30. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that his delegation welcomed the Committee's decision to approve the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's request; that its membership in the Committee would further strengthen support for the Palestinian cause.

31. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) congratulated the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the Committee's approval of its request.

32. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's membership would make an important contribution to the Committee's work.

33. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that as a staunch supporter of human rights, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would help defend the objectives of the Committee.

Accreditation of civil society organizations to the Committee

34. **The Chair** drew attention to Working Paper No. 7, which contained applications for accreditation to the Committee submitted by four non-governmental organizations. After reviewing the applications, the Bureau had concluded that the four organizations fulfilled the criteria for accreditation and had recommended that they should be accredited. He therefore took it that the Committee wished to approve the applications.

35. *The requests for accreditation to the Committee received from Global Political Trends Center (Turkey), Free Palestine Movement (United States), Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet (Canada) and Project Hope (Canada) were approved.*

Other matters

36. *A documentary film entitled "Alienation of Jerusalem" was shown.*

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.